



MEMORANDUM

TO: House Energy and Technology Committee

FROM: Keith den Hollander, Chairman
Christian Coalition of Michigan

RE: Testimony in Support of Increasing Michigan's Commitment to
Renewable Energy

DATE: September 17, 2013

There is a line between worship of the Creator and worship of the creation that many groups and people often cross. Despite that, people still have a moral obligation to be good stewards of the resources that God has entrusted to them. The Christian Coalition of Michigan's view toward our energy sources is consistent with this perspective – they are all resources that God has placed here for our responsible use.

To us, that means that we are free to use the oil, the coal and the natural gas he has placed in the earth; but also the wind, the sun, the manure and any other resource that can be economically and responsibly used or harnessed to create energy. An “all of the above” approach to energy generation is beneficial to our state, our economy, and to our long-term sustainability – it reduces the amount of energy derived from fossil fuels, and increases the amount generated from renewable sources.



Increasing our use of renewable energy will improve public health and help protect the lives of the most vulnerable among us. Study after study demonstrates the negative health effects on people who live near coal plants – by and large people who are too poor to move to a safer community. The quality of our air and water impacts not just your health and mine and people across Michigan, but also the health and life of the unborn.

We believe in an energy policy consisting of further commitment to renewable energy because it will reduce the amount of fuel we import from other nations – many led by people who would do America harm. No one feels this more than our military – the men and women we place in harms way to keep us safe. Regrettably, 10 percent of the casualties suffered by U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan were the result of transporting fuel or protecting fuel lines. Energy independence will lead to greater national security, and save lives.

Increasing our commitment to renewable energy also makes economic sense. Energy is the world's fastest growing economic sector, and with Michigan's tradition of innovation, entrepreneurship and manufacturing know-how, we are uniquely positioned to capitalize on this market – many companies in the state, including several in each of your districts, are already leading the way. In fact, according to a study by The Hill Group, Michigan's energy economy already supports more than 20,000 jobs and contributes over \$5 billion to our economy annually. Fremont's Digester, and the new Digester being built in Lowell are perfect examples of renewable, self-sustaining energy innovations that are protecting God's creation and creating jobs. Our state energy policies should encourage these types of projects, and clear the way for those like them in the future.



That being said, it is our opinion that all of our forms of energy production should be allowed to compete on an even playing field, and that no energy source should benefit from taxpayer support at the expense of another.

The Christian Coalition of Michigan urges the legislature to work with the state's public utilities, business organizations and leaders, energy experts and yes, even leaders in the faith community, to develop an energy policy that encourages responsible earth stewardship, creates jobs, spurs innovation, boosts our economy, improves public health and leads the way to energy independence – all while keeping rates affordable for both job creators and job seekers. It's a conversation we're having in churches across Michigan – and we encourage you to join us, because we believe it's possible.

For too long, conservatives have sat on the sideline, allowing important issues like renewable energy to be defined by groups we consider extreme – leading to the adoption of policies we oppose, which we then use as an excuse to stay off the playing field. Instead of letting others define the issue, it's time for conservatives to lead – and to work to develop a sensible, “all of the above” renewable energy policy that protects Michigan's future, and ensures Michigan has a future worth protecting.

I respectfully thank you for your consideration.